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Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Afghanistan.

You have had heard from a number of witnesses recently who have challenged our strategy in Afghanistan. I would submit to you that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is largely sound. The challenge lies in properly executing elements of the strategy. Execution requires the right amount of resources – both military and non-military – and then using these resources in a disciplined, coordinated fashion, over a sustained period of time.

Our basic strategy is to use U.S. and international forces, partnered with Afghan units, to counter the insurgency, while building up the capacity of the Afghan government to govern. As Afghan Minister of Defense Wardak told NATO Ministers last week, "The simple counter insurgency prescription is to Clear, Hold, and Build." I emphasize the "build" part here. International Crisis Group put it succinctly in their November 2006 report, *Countering Afghanistan's Insurgency: No Quick Fixes,* when they observed that: "Fighting the insurgency and nation-building are mutually reinforcing."[1]

[1] ICG, *Countering Afghanistan's Insurgency: No Quick Fixes,* page ii.

I would emphasize that this isn't only, or even primarily, a U.S. task. This is a task for the international community, our NATO ISAF partners, the United Nations, and above all the government and people of Afghanistan. Because there are multiple actors, there are some differences with regard to the basic strategy; the U.S. and some of our key partners put a higher priority on implementing a traditional counterinsurgency approach. Other partners, however, place a greater emphasis on the "nation-building" aspect of the mission. These differences are an inevitable part of coalition warfare, but there are steps we can take to enhance unity of effort. For instance, Secretary Gates is working with his counterparts on an ISAF "vision statement" that lays out what we want to achieve collectively in Afghanistan, and how we intend to get there.

Developing the Afghan National Security Forces is a critical element in this strategy. The Afghan National Army (ANA) is increasingly assuming a leading role in the planning and execution of operations. 49,400 personnel are currently assigned to the ANA, with a projected increase of between 10,000 and 15,000 personnel per year. To date, the U.S. has invested about $8 billion on the Army's development.

Secretary Gates has agreed to support an Afghan-proposed expansion of the Army by 10,000 personnel, above the previously authorized 70,000 force structure. This increase was recently approved by the Afghanistan Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) that met in Tokyo on 4-5 February.

Further consideration is being given to the Army's longer-term end strength. I expect it will eventually grow beyond 80,000 as the Afghans assume greater responsibility for the security situation in their own country and both OEF and ISAF

troops withdraw over time, though I know of no timetable for withdrawal. I don't know what the likely "end state" number for the ANA will be, nor how it would be funded, other than the fact that these security forces are likely to exceed the ability of the Afghan government to pay for itself, thus requiring some kind of sustained international financial assistance.

In contrast, the Police lag behind the Army in both capability and effectiveness. The Police have not been able to hold areas cleared of insurgents by ISAF and the ANA – the Hold part of Minister Wardak's "clear, hold, build." Furthermore, the Police have a history of corruption that has undermined their credibility.

The Afghans, with considerable support from the U.S., are taking steps to fix these problems. These steps include: better weapons and equipment for the Police, leadership changes within the Ministry of Interior, pay and rank reform (including pay parity with the Army), integrating Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs) with ANP units, and executing the Focused District Development (FDD) plan. The FDD is an initiative to temporarily insert teams of highly proficient Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) into selected districts while the regular ANP are immersed in 8 weeks of intensive refresher training before resuming their positions.

So far, the U.S. has invested $5 billion in Police development. There are some 75,000 personnel assigned to the ANP, of a projected 82,000 end-strength. I'd like to note the sacrifices that the Police have made. Over a four week period between December and January, for example, the ANP suffered 54 killed in action, compared to 13 ANA soldiers killed in action over the same time.

ISAF is fighting alongside the ANA and ANP. NATO's ISAF mission currently includes 44,000 troops from nearly 40 countries, in NATO's first deployment outside the European theater. Some 16,000 U.S. troops are under the ISAF command structure, led by General Dan McNeill. An additional 3,200 U.S. Marines will soon deploy to Afghanistan, of which about 2,200 will join the fight in the south, while the other 1,000 will be partnered with Afghan units, primarily the ANP.

Among the Alliance members, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Romania are engaged in intense combat operations in the south, and Poland fights as an integrated member of the CJTF-82 team in RC East. But some others have not been willing to deploy their soldiers to Afghanistan's hot spots. Secretary Gates recently expressed his concern about "the Alliance evolving into a two-tiered Alliance, in which you have some Allies willing to fight and die to protect people's security, and others who are not," a concern he has raised with his NATO counterparts during the recent NATO ministerial meeting in Vilnius.

The U.S. currently has about 27,500 troops deployed in Afghanistan. To date, 1,863 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in action, and 415 of our soldiers have been killed. Some 280 of our ISAF and coalition partners have been killed.

Despite these sacrifices, the Alliance has fallen short of meeting its stated commitments in several areas. Afghanistan needs more maneuver forces, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), aviation assets, and mentors for the Afghan National Security Forces. Some Allies also need to remove restrictive "caveats" on their forces,

which all too often preclude their troops from taking on certain missions or deploying to particular regions.

Some recent reports, like the Afghanistan Study Group (ASG), focus on the command and control arrangements of the military and the civilian structures of international forces. The reporting structures of ISAF and OEF are complex, and there is no clear point where authority for both the military and international reconstruction efforts comes together in country. Some military commanders have told me the current arrangement is awkward but it works. It's my view that having an integrated campaign plan is more important than devising alternative command and control arrangements. Getting Allies to agree to an ISAF vision statement will be the first step in enabling us to develop this type of integrated plan – a plan that integrates the "clear, hold, and build" parts of the strategy.

As I noted earlier, military means alone will not prevail in this contest. In fact, the overall trend we've seen in the preceding years is a transition by the enemy from conventional engagements to greater reliance on asymmetric tactics – for example, suicide bombers and IEDs. They recognize there's no possibility to defeat ISAF and the ANA on the battlefield, so they resort to terror to intimidate the population and create the impression that the Afghan government can't provide security.

In order to defeat the insurgents, the population has to believe that the Afghan government offers the best hope of a brighter future, or at least a better shot at basic security for them and their families. That means they need to see improved governance and rule of law, accelerated development, a stronger economy, and positive steps to

tackle corruption and narcotics trafficking. Where we've undertaken a concerted effort to tackle these issues, such as in Regional Command East, and with the support of strong local leadership, this approach clearly works.

The Department of Defense and a number of our partners in ISAF play a role in the reconstruction activities that have led to kinds of successes we've seen in Regional Command East – for instance, DoD is significantly involved in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). However, civilian expertise has to be integrated with the military's capabilities. State, USAID, and Department of Agriculture personnel are partnered with U.S. military officers in most of our PRTs. I believe the civilian elements of the interagency need to be able to deploy more of these experts into conflict zones like Afghanistan.

Appointing a senior international civilian coordinator would also help us improve the effectiveness of our overall effort – and, perhaps even more importantly, help make the case for sustained investments by the international community of both military and economic assistance to Afghanistan. There is some lack of coherence among the various nations and official organizations involved in Afghanistan, which a senior coordinator could help fix.

I am also concerned by signs of questioning of the long-term commitment to Afghanistan by both politicians and citizens in some ISAF-contributing nations. Both the Afghan government and the insurgents follow any signs of wavering commitment with intense interest – as do both the Pakistanis and Iranians. A senior coordinator, especially

one with UN credentials and credibility among NATO Alliance members at home, could help counter this softening of will.

The narcotics trade is a huge headache with no easy solutions. We have a counternarcotics strategy with five pillars – public information, alternative development, eradication, interdiction, and justice reform. These five pieces come together to form a comprehensive strategy that presents incentives to Afghans to encourage them to participate in legal livelihoods while providing disincentives that deter them from participating in all aspects and levels of the narcotics industry. Implementing this long-term strategy is challenging, particularly in the insecure south of the country where poppy cultivation is highest. For example, without an adequate alternative livelihood, we risk creating insurgents out of ordinary farmers whose sole source of feeding their families has been taken from them. I saw that Senator Hagel zoomed in on this problem in his comments at the Foreign Relations Committee January 31 hearings.

Another significant challenge is external – namely, the Taliban safe-haven in Pakistan, and the willingness of the Iranians to provide weapons and other assistance to the Taliban. Both Senators Biden and Lugar highlighted this concern in their comments and questions at the SFRC hearings on January 31.

Everyone agrees that we – the U.S., the international community, and above all the Afghan government – need to work with the Government of Pakistan to eliminate safe-havens in the border areas. But this is going to take a long time, and – as in Afghanistan – is not going to be achieved by military force alone. It will require helping Pakistan to build up its own capabilities to wage a counterinsurgency.

As for the Iranians, intercepting and capturing arms convoys to the Taliban may be the most effective local tactic for the time being. We need to do this aggressively, but we also need to monitor the trends for indications that this is turning into a strategic problem. Our international partners, along with the Afghan government, can also play a productive role in convincing Iran that a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is very much in everyone's interests.

In conclusion, I would endorse another point made by Minister Wardak in his speech to the NATO Ministers, when he said that "the war in Afghanistan is eminently winnable. But only if the Afghans are enabled to defend their own homeland. The enduring solution must be an Afghan solution."

Thank you. I look forward to your comments, concerns, and questions.

Note: ISAF consists of both NATO Alliance members and non-NATO contributors. The term "Coalition" generally refers to those forces deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).